

Amendments

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (previously presented) A method of distributing movies to customer households comprising the steps of:

blanket transmitting, at faster than real time speeds, a plurality of movies to a plurality of customer households;

permitting at least one customer household to preselect and record transmitted movies;

permitting the at least one customer household to playback for viewing any preselected, recorded movie;

communicating movie playback information from the at least one customer household to a central controller system; and

using the communicated movie playback information to bill the at least one customer household for only those preselected, recorded movies that are played back for viewing.

Claims 2-4. (canceled)

Claim 5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 including the step of encoding the transmitted movies with data permitting playback only on a playback device with compatible decoding means.

Claim 6. (previously presented) The method of claim 5 including the step of encoding the transmitted movies with time-based code keys A.

Claim 7. (previously presented) The method of claim 6 wherein the time-based code keys A encoded into the transmitted movies are correlated with periodic time-based key codes B that are blanket transmitted to all customer households and time-based key codes C that are provided to customer households that are in good standing.

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Claim 8. (previously presented) The method of claim 7 wherein the step of communicating movie playback information from each customer household to the central controller system is performed when the time-based codes C are provided.

Claim 9. (previously presented) The method of claim 8 wherein the communications between the central controller system and the customer households are carried out via phone/modem.

Claims 10-15. (canceled)

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Claim 16. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of blanket transmitting at faster than real time speeds is carried out by direct broadcast satellite transmission on multiple channels.

Claim 17. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of blanket transmitting at faster than real time speeds a plurality of movies is carried out by transmitting movies in compressed-time format.

Claims 18-28. (canceled)

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Claim 29. (currently amended) A computer-based recording, storage and playback station for recording, storing and playing multimedia content programs, said station comprising: means for receiving encoded multimedia content programs and associated content information transmitted from a content provider at faster than real time speeds, said content information including content availability, scheduling and content pricing data, and said encoded content including a combination of time-based code keys to provide authorization for playing back recorded multimedia content programs; multimedia content display device for enabling a customer to view available multimedia content programs and associated information including scheduling and pricing data; interactive means providing a program guide via said multimedia content display device for enabling customers to select available multimedia content programs and

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associated information and to select functions for recording multimedia content and functions for playback of said content via a suitable multimedia content playback device;

a decoder device for receiving and decoding said selected multimedia content programs;

a recording and content playback device for receiving said selected multimedia content programs and recording said multimedia content programs in a storage media device, said interactive means enabling a customer to initiate playback of said stored multimedia content program at a desired time;

control means verifying a received combination of said time-based code keys for authorizing play-back of said multimedia content via said multimedia content display device at said desired time, and enabling said playback.

Claim 30. (currently amended) The computer-based recording, storage and playback station as claimed in Claim 29, wherein said control means generates viewed-content information associated with those multimedia content programs played back by a customer, said station further including: means for communicating generated viewed-content information from each said customer household to a central billing system to verify that a selected and, recorded movie-multimedia content program has been played back for viewing, said central billing system receiving said generated viewed-content information and generating a bill to charge each customer household for every viewing of selected, recorded multimedia content program content.

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Claim 31. (previously presented) The computer-based recording, storage and playback station as claimed in Claim 30, wherein said multimedia content is encoded with a first time-based code key associated with said multimedia content and valid for a pre-determined time duration.

Claim 32. (previously presented) The computer-based recording, storage and playback station as claimed in Claim 31, wherein said multimedia content is periodically encoded with a second time-based code key correlated with said first time-based code key and valid for a pre-determined time period.

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Claim 33. (previously presented) The computer-based recording, storage and playback station as claimed in Claim 32, further comprising means for receiving a third time-based code key from said billing system for identifying a status of said customer for a predefined time period, said control means verifying a received combination of said first, second and third time-based code keys for enabling play-back of said multimedia content.

Claim 34. (previously presented) The computer-based recording, storage and playback station as claimed in Claim 32, further comprising means for communicating an identity of said multimedia content and a unique identifying address associated with said customer to said central billing system upon initiating the play-back of multimedia content, said central billing system responsive to said communication for generating a third time-based code key for identifying a status of said customer, and communicating said third time-based code key back to said customer to enable said play-back of said multimedia content.

Claim 35. (previously presented) The computer-based recording, storage and playback station of claim 32, wherein the first time-based code key is encoded into the transmitted multimedia content and said second time-based key codes are blanket transmitted to all customer households.

Claims 36-47. (canceled)

Claim 48. (currently amended) A method for recording, storing and playing multimedia content comprising the steps of:

a) receiving multimedia content programs and associated content information transmitted from a content provider, said content information including content availability, scheduling and content pricing data, said received content being received at faster than real time speeds and being encoded with a combination of time-based code keys to provide authorization for playing back recorded multimedia content programs;

b) generating a program guide via an audiovisual display device for enabling a customer to view and select available multimedia content programs and associated

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information and to select functions for recording multimedia content and functions for playback of said content via a suitable playback device;

- c) decoding received selected multimedia content programs;
- d) receiving said selected multimedia content programs and recording said multimedia content programs in a storage media device;
- e) enabling a customer to initiate playback of stored multimedia content program at a desired time;
- f) verifying a received combination of said time-based code keys for authorizing play-back of said multimedia content via said audiovisual display device at said desired time to enable said playback.

Claim 49. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 48, further including the steps of:

generating viewed-content information associated with a multimedia content program played back by a customer;

communicating said generated viewed-content information from each said customer household to a central billing system to verify that a selected, recorded movie has been played back for viewing, said central billing system receiving said generated viewed-content information; and

said central billing system generating a bill to charge each customer household for each viewing of selected, recorded multimedia content program content.

Claim 50. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 49, wherein prior to step

a), the step of encoding said multimedia content with a first time-based code key associated with said multimedia content and valid for a pre-determined time duration.

Claim 51. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 50, wherein prior to step a), the step of periodically encoding said multimedia content with a second time-based code key correlated with said first time-based code key and valid for a pre-determined time period.

Claims 52-63. (canceled)

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Claims 64. (previously presented) A method of distributing movies to customer households comprising the steps of:

simultaneously blanket transmitting a plurality of movies to a plurality of customer households;

permitting at least one customer household to preselect and record transmitted music selections;

permitting the at least one customer household to select at least one recorded movie to maintain for unrestricted playback;

communicating unrestricted playback information from the at least one customer household to a central controller system; and

using the communicated unrestricted playback information to bill the at least one customer household for the recorded music selections selected for unrestricted playback.

Claims 65-67. (canceled)